

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1-5 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. No new matter is added. After entry of this Amendment, claims 8 and 12-14 will remain pending in the patent application. Reconsideration and allowance of the present patent application based on the foregoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

Entry of the Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 as the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not present any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search as the amendments merely amplify issues discussed throughout the prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of the Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 8 and 12-14 are allowed.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Funayama *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,636,390) in view of Norihashi *et al.* (JP 2000-090424), Tsuchiyama *et al.* (JP-10-222836) and Knabe *et al.* (JP2001-101651). Claims 1-5 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter therein, thus rendering moot the rejections of these claims.

All matters having been addressed, Applicant respectfully requests entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the immediate allowance of all pending claims.

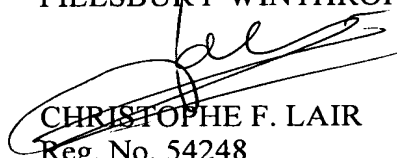
Applicant's Counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter.

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Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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